Leadership Styles of Education Leaders: A Mixed-Method Cross-cultural Comparative Study of K-12 Schools

SHORT SYNOPSIS

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by

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby declare that the short synopsis **"LEADERSHIP STYLES OF EDUCATION LEADERS: A MIXED-METHOD CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARATIVE STUDY OF K-12 SCHOOLS"** being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in **MANAGEMENT** under **SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT** of Manav Rachna International Institute of Research &Studies, Faridabad during the academic year **2021-2022**. It is a bona fide record of original work carried out under the supervision of **DR. SANJAY SRIVASTAVA & DR. NANDINI SRIVASTAVA**. It has not been submitted in full or part to any other university or institute for degree or diploma. Further, it is certified that the short synopsis is plagiarism-free, and the proof has been submitted.

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores and cross-cultural assesses and compares the leadership styles of education leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders, etc.) in K-12 Indian schools vis-à-vis international schools. The study also aims to advance on how the leadership style of academic leaders is related to culture domains and dimensions and is affected by certain demographic variables. In due course, emerging themes of leadership styles in the Indian and foreign education systems will be gathered and analyzed through the cross-cultural lens and from opened-ended qualitative responses. Further, samples will be collected from two different categories, academic leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders) in Indian schools and schools in other countries from both private schools and public schools. For the quantitative study, global leaders and Indian academic leaders (n=100-150 for each cohort) will be randomly selected as samples. From the same cohort, high-scoring leaders will be randomly selected for qualitative in-depth interviews (n = 10 for each cohort; Indian vis-à-vis Global leaders) through simple probability random sampling method for quantitative study and purposive sampling for qualitative research. Data analysis will be quantitatively done with the help of a t-test, ANOVA, and correlation by SPSS. Qualitative analysis will be done through content and thematic analysis. The study aims to give direction to educational institutions, management, academic leaders, directors, heads, teachers, and policymakers to discern effective leadership styles to help achieve new and higher educational benchmarks.

Keywords – *Leadership styles, Cross-cultural leaders, Higher Education Institutions, New Education policies*,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sl. No.	Description	Page No.
	CERTIFICATE	
	ABSTRACT	
1	INTRODUCTION	1-7
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	8-15
3	RATIONALE	16
4	RESEARCH DESIGN AND GAPS	17-18
5	SCOPE OF STUDY	19
6	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	20
	REFERENCES	
	PLAGIARISM REPORT	

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Union cabinet took a significant step towards bringing about significant changes in the education system, both at the school and higher levels, by introducing the New National Education Policy (NEP) on July 29, 2020. The NEP is built on four foundational principles: Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability.The NEP 2020 envisions - "*An education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower(NEP, 2020, p.7*)". In short, it focuses on a robust top-class quality education system aligned with global standards in India.

As a result of the introduction of the NEP, schools are preparing themselves to adopt novel and groundbreaking education and learning techniques. Consequently, there is a growing requirement for educational leaders who can proficiently execute the NEP within schools. These leaders are anticipated to take the lead in this transformational movement by shifting their emphasis from merely an administrative capacity to an active, change-making role. They must be knowledgeable about contemporary global advancements and universal practices to fulfill the role of a pioneer and a leader. Additionally, they bear a significant responsibility of managing school organizations effectively in accordance with both the country's education policies and global standards.

The Present Study:

In this research, Bass's theory of transformational and transactional leadership will be utilized, along with their associated behavioral factors, to evaluate the leadership styles of academic leaders.

Bass (1985) categorized leadership into three primary domains: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. The theory identifies seven distinct factors, consisting of four transformational factors (Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration), two transactional factors (Contingent reward and Management-by-exception passive), and one non-leadership factor (Laissez-faire

leadership).These factors have been further elaborated upon by Avolio (1999) and Bass &Avolio (1992).

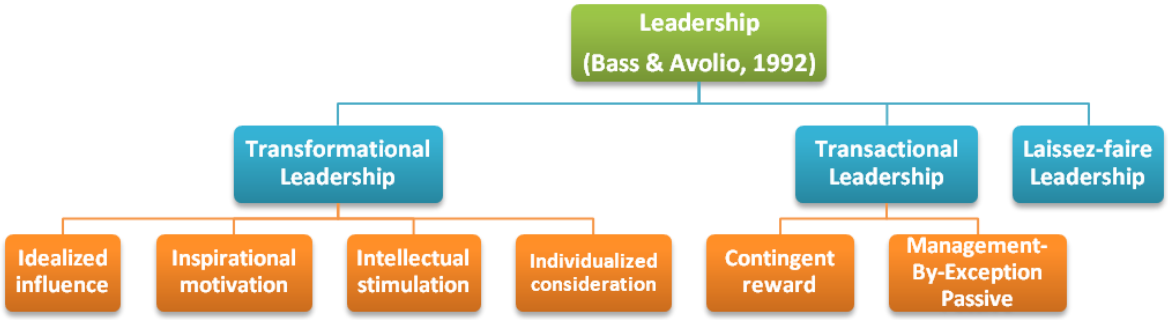

Figure 4: Leadership Model (Bass &Avolio, 1992)

This research will utilize two models to evaluate and compare schools' cultural aspects and orientations. The first model is UdaiPareek's(2003) OCTAPACE culture model, which consists of eight steps (O-openness, C-collaboration, T-trust, A-authenticity, P-proactivity, A-autonomy, C-confrontation with problems, E-experimentation) to create a functional ETHOS. This model describes how organizations can foster a culture that allows employees to take initiative, experiment, innovate, and make things happen.

Figure 5: OCTAPACE Model of Organizational Culture (Pareek, 2003)

The second model is the CVSCALE - Personal Cultural Values Scale, which measures the dimensions of Hofstede culture at the individual level. As each country has a great deal of cultural diversity among its members, it is challenging to attribute cultural values to each member of society at the national level. Therefore, this model and its corresponding scales are beneficial for researchers and practitioners working with individual stakeholders across cultures. The five dimensions of individual cultural values measured by this model are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, long-term orientation, and masculinity(Yoo, Dontho, and Lenartowicz, 2011). This model links individual attitudes and behaviors to cultural orientations at the individual level, using primary data obtained from survey responses from individuals, without relying on Hofstede metrics.

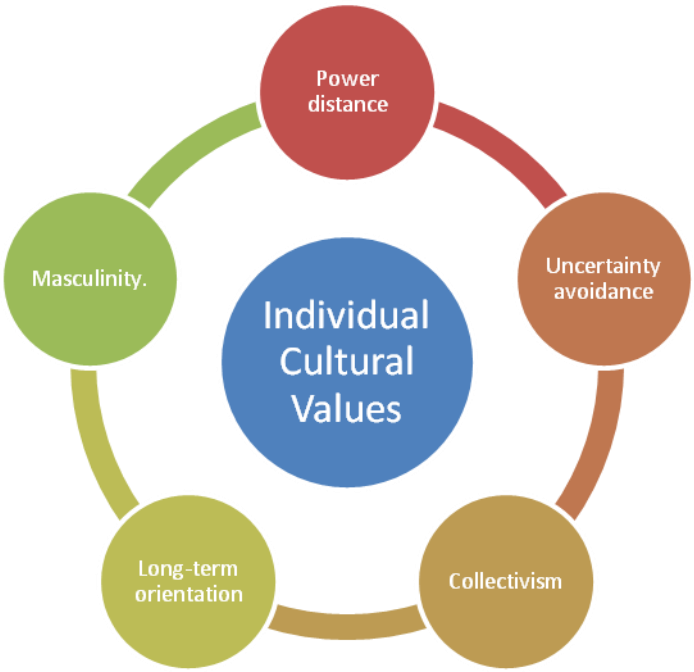

Figure 6: Individual Culture Values Model (Yoo, Dontho, and Lenartowicz, 2011)

Statement of the Problem:

As per NEP (2020) Para 5.13, Education leaders in the Indian K-12 system must exercise leadership styles that match global standards, explicitly develop a caring and inclusive culture, and encourage effective learning at their schools (p.20). Many studies have independently investigated the role of leadership in Indian school systems and Global schools, but few have tied the two topics together to contrast them culturally. The combined lens of Indian and global school leadership styles basis cultural differences will form the framework for this study. To gain insight into the leadership styles that are effective or ineffective in implementing innovative reforms in schools, educationists need to understand this novel and significant concept that is particularly relevant in today's NEP settings focused on reform.

Aim of the study:

The proposed research aims to explore and cross-culturally assesses and compares the leadership styles of education leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders, etc.) in K-12 Indian schools vis-à-vis international schools. The study also aims to explore how the leadership style of academic leaders is related to culture domains and dimensions and is affected by certain demographic variables like – age, gender, experience as an educator, tenure as a leader, etc. Additionally, emerging themes of leadership styles in the Indian and foreign education systems will be gathered and analyzed through the cross-cultural lens and from opened-ended qualitative responses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Leadership: Global Perspective

Numerous explanations exist regarding the concept of leadership. However, most of these definitions suggest that leadership involves a conscious influence exerted by an individual or a group over others, with the intention of shaping the actions and interactions within a group or organization **(Bensimon et al., 1989; Bolman& Deal, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2000; Yukl, 2002).** Leadership is typically linked to official organizational roles within schools in the educational setting. Consequently, conversations regarding school leadership usually pertain to principals, head teachers, heads of departments, subject leaders, and others in similar positions.

Various descriptions can be found in the pedagogical academic leadership literature. **Leithwood and Duke (1999)** found that academic leadership focuses on the behavior of teachers engaging in behaviour that directly affect student performance. According to **Sheppard (1996)**, leadership included both the school culture and the behavior of teachers.**Hallinger and Murphy (1987)** and In **Hallinger's (2005)** summary, effective school leadership was identified as comprising three key elements: articulating the mission of the school, overseeing educational activities, and fostering a positive school climate.. Hughes (2004) reflects academic leadership with a successful director who shares stakeholder expectations. Research by **Cotton (2003)** indicates that the school principal's leadership role is essential in facilitating school-wide changes such as student performance. **DuFour (2005)** added that school leaders should be pedagogically responsible for the school. In short, school leadership has been recognized as essential to promoting and managing school development, and school administrators (particularly school leadership) are the pillars of a successful educational organization.

Literature reports that school leadership is recognized as the second most influential factor impacting student learning, as stated by **Leithwood and Jantzi (2006).** It was further supported by **Robinson (2007)**, who found that 25% of total student learning impact came from school administration. **Senge (1990)** noted that ever-changing systems require

different types of leadership at different stages of organizational development. The diversity of views on educational leadership in literature leads to different perspectives. The most widely accepted theoretical perspective on educational leadership includes six dimensions (**Leithwood& Duke, 1999**). These are -

(a) Instructional leadership concentrates on the primary aspects of a school's operations, which include teaching, learning, student progress, and achievement.

(b) Transformative leadership involves actively involving peers, initiating change, and enhancing performance.

(c) Moral leadership prioritizes values, vision, and ethical principles as crucial elements.

(d) Participatory leadership underscores the significance of engaging employees in collaborative decision-making and fostering social capital.

(e) Managerial leadership requires leaders to focus on roles, tasks, and behaviors.

(f) Contingency leadership centers around leaders' adaptive responses to organizational circumstances and the evolving challenges they confront over time.

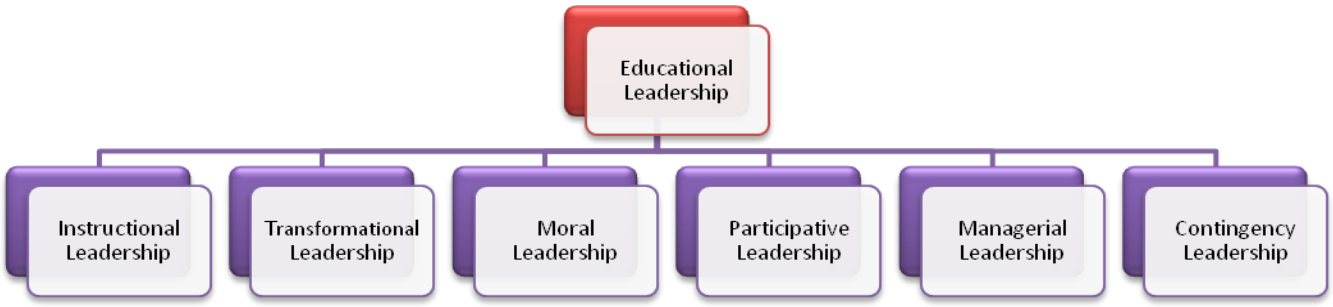

Figure: 1 Educational Leadership Model ((Leithwood and Duke, 1999)

Educational Leadership: Indian Perspective

The academic environment in India possesses a distinctiveness attributed to its demographics (**Oc, 2018**) and the diverse student population encompassing various languages, cultures, customs, and beliefs.In India, academic institutions primarily operate

within a structured framework of prescribed curricula and a hierarchical class system, while also incorporating some consideration for students' needs and interests. The teaching and learning processes draw from real-life experiences but remain predominantly classroom-oriented. While test results remain the primary focus, there is an increasing recognition for the importance of fulfilling students' deeper learning needs beyond mere scores. Pedagogical and educational styles characterize school leadership and training in the Indian environment. The general term 'Academic Leadership' is assumed to encompass educational and pedagogical leadership, emphasizing curricular subjects (**NIEPA, 2020**).

In the context of Indian academia, academic leadership is a complex and diverse process that is united by the shared objective of aligning student learning with the assessed outcomes rather than merely the measured ones. Leadership in Indian schools is characterized by four fundamental functions: influencing others, guiding others, empowering others, and collaborating with others (**Mythili, 2020**).*Influencing others* means having the ability to influence the behavior of others or change their behavior without manipulating rewards or punishments and without using authority. In Indian schools, the principal's influence over others is marked by the exercise of legitimate power and authority. Taking on a leadership role involves providing direction and guidance by establishing diverse leadership teams dedicated to various school processes.Academic Leaders/Principals work with their teams to set and achieve specific and measurable goals. *Empowering others* means inspiring enthusiasm, inspiring curiosity, thinking outside the box, listening to others, building trust and respect, being open to ideas, and developing expertise in others. It means trying to solve personal and personal problems in at least minor steps.

The aim of academic leaders is to empower individuals to accomplish the objectives of their institution. Collaboration with others entails actively involving and working together with teachers, students, educational leaders, and stakeholders within the education system to enhance both school and student learning. Academia leaders can fulfill this core function through distributed leadership emphasizing mutual consent and collective action.

Through these four core functions, academic leaders lead their schools by practicing four leadership styles: responsive style, responsible style, inclusive style, and network style of leadership. (**Mythili, 2020**).

(a) Responsive leadership means that academic leaders understand, recognize and respond to students, teachers, and parents' needs, aspirations, and expectations.

(b) Responsible leadership means that school leaders are accountable for their decisions and actions to improve the quality of their schools and the learning of their students.

(c) Inclusive leadership intentionally ensures that every child, teacher, parent, and community member, irrespective of their abilities, skills, intelligence, or knowledge, is granted equal opportunities in the school process.

(d) Netisk leadership means leaders working at various levels of the school and education system are closely linked to support the school and its leaders.

Figure: 2 Functions and Leadership Styles of Principals in the Indian Context (Mythili, 2020)

India's K-12 education system has undergone a shift in focus toward leadership, which has brought about a transformation in the role of school principals. Rather than being solely an administrator or manager, the principal is now responsible for directing the learning process and ensuring students receive a quality education. As a result, traditional leadership styles such as transactional and authoritarian leadership are deemed less relevant and meaningful (**Crippen, 2005; Bryman, 2007; Prawat& Peterson, 1999**) in the modern era. Instead, collaborative, distributed, or shared leadership styles are now considered more appropriate for educational leadership.

Organizational Culture

Organizational **Gumus et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 1999; Stewart, 2006**culture is becoming increasingly important and relevant as competition changes and organizations face mounting pressures. Interestingly, organizational culture simultaneously creates both stability and adaptability within an organization. Culture represents a clear set of mutually agreed-upon values that promotes stability by acting as the glue that binds the organization. Organizational culture is crucial in enabling organizations to perform at their best by providing the necessary energy for proper functioning, analogous to proper blood flow to all organs. The culture of talent development is born first from management's beliefs and then from the practices and systems of talent development.

Organizational culture pertains to the shared system of meanings that members hold, distinguishing an organization from others. This system of meaning comprises a set of essential attributes that the organization values. Organizational culture primarily revolves around how employees perceive the cultural attributes of an organization rather than their personal preferences, making it a descriptive term. Furthermore, it reflects a collective perception shared among the members of the organization. Culture holds significant influence in shaping an organization and undergoes evolution based on both internal and external perspectivesof the organization.

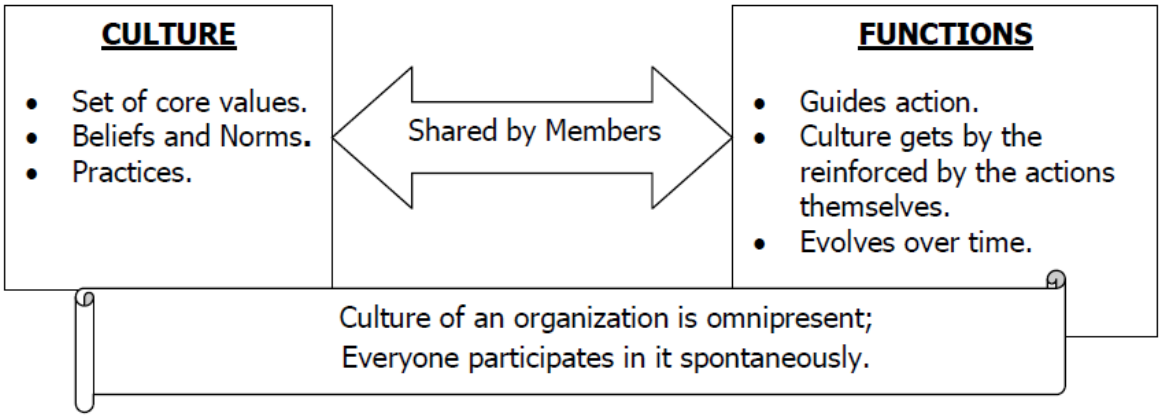

Figure:3 Culture and its Functions *Source: Self-Created*

Educational leaders must understand that fostering a positive school culture is critical to fostering student learning. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of the steps school leaders and principals need to take to shape school culture and bring about positive change in the classroom. Therefore, educational leaders must recognize what leadership styles and behaviors positively impact school culture and, in turn, improve student learning.

Research Gaps:

This research aims to fill the void in current research by identifying and comparing the cultural domains, dimensions, and leadership styles of principals in Indian schools and schools abroad. The study provides valuable insights into the leadership styles of education leaders in K-12 schools. It highlights some cultural and contextual factors that impact leadership in different settings, which have yet to be done in combination.

Research Questions:

The primary research questions of this literary work are as below:

1. What is the leadership style of education leaders in Indian school's vis-a-vis global schools?

2. What are the predominant cultural dimension and orientations of education leaders in Indian schools vis-à-vis global schools?

3. What is the difference in leadership styles of leaders in Indian schools and schools of other cultures and countries?

4. Are there any age or gender differences in school leaders' cultural dimensions and leadership styles?

5. What is the correlation between the tenure that a school leader/administrator had held with the type of culture and leadership style they had displayed?

6. What are the dimensions (as analyzed through open-ended qualitative responses) that display leadership styles based on the culture of school administrators?

7. What suggestions can be given to future research and industry leaders in improving leadership styles based on the cultural dimensions of school leaders in India?

Objectives-

The current study will help determine the cultural orientation, cultural dimension, and leadership styles of education leaders in Indian K-12 systems and how dimensions differ when compared with the global academic leaders and school systems. The objectives of the study are-

(1) To investigate the cultural dimensions, cultural orientation, and leadership styles of school leaders in Indian K-12 Indian schools and global schools.

(2) To examine disparities in leadership styles, cultural orientation, and cultural dimensions among school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and global schools.

(3) To investigate how demographic factors influence academic leaders' leadership styles, cultural dimensions, and orientations.

(4) To explore and compare the relationship between leadership styles, cultural domains, and cultural dimensions of academic leaders in Indian and global schools.

(5) To identify themes that help expedite different leadership styles and cultural domains in school administrators.

(6) To provide suggestions for enhancing leaders' efficiency based on the schools' cultural milieu.

Rationale:

This research is to enhance knowledge of leadership styles based on cultures in the school system in India vis-à-vis global schools. The rationale is grounded as below-:

1. Cultural analysis of the leadership style of school principals is significant for all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and students.

2. There is a call to exercise leadership in schools specific to the Indian cultural context that might help achieve NEP goals.

3. The knowledge developed through this research work can help build active and inspiring academic leaders in the Indian cultural context.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Method

A mixed-method research design will be used in the present research, ensuring a methodological and interpretative triangulation associated with quantitative and qualitative data sources. Building on the works of **Creswell (2009) and Lee (1999)**, this study will utilize a mixed-method research design, which entails quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Methodology

Participants: The sample will fall into two categories, academic leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders) in Indian schools and other countries. This study will be carried out in both private schools and public schools.

Sample Size: For the quantitative study, global leaders and Indian academic leaders (n=100-150 for each cohort) will be randomly selected as samples. From the same cohort, high-scoring leaders will be randomly selected for qualitative in-depth interviews (n = 10 for each cohort; Indian vis-à-vis Global leaders).

Sampling Method: Simple probability random sampling method will be adopted for the quantitative study, whereas purposive sampling will be used for the qualitative research.

Data Collection Technique:

Demographic data of the sample (age, gender, geographical location, tenure as an educator, tenure in a leadership role, etc.) will be taken in the data collection form. Data will be collected on the personal information sheet. Data collection will be done in select schools in select countries.

The following measuring instruments will be used in the study:

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 6-S*:* Quantitative research will use MLQ-6S, an abbreviation for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass and Avolio (1992). Various methods have been employed to ensure the reliability of MLQs,

including consistency checks, manager-subordinate agreements, and peer evaluations based on small-group performance (**Bass, 1998**). Several studies by **Tejeda (2001)** and Avolio and **Bass (1999)** provide substantial evidence for the validity of MLQ across different validity types. The transformational subscale of the MLQ was found to have high convergent validity as items were found to be highly inter-correlated. The negative correlation of the transformational subscale of MLQ with the management-by-exception subscale and laissez-faire leadership subscale supported discriminative validity. Additionally, Tejeda (2001) found that a condensed set of items from the MLQ demonstrates initial support for predictive and construct validity.

OCTAPACE (*Pareek, 2003*)- The study will use the OCTAPACE profile developed by Udai K. Pareek to measure organizational culture dimensions. Consisting of 40 items, the scale measures corporate ethos based on eight values: "openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proactivity, autonomy, collaboration, and experimentation".

CVScale(*Yoo et al., 2011*)–This study will also use Hofstede's CVSCALE, his 5-dimensional personal cultural value scale of 26 points that assesses cultural aspects at the individual level. l. Respondents will evaluate the cultural orientation items using 5-point Likert-type scales, with values ranging from "very unimportant" to "very important" for the long-term orientation dimension and from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for the remaining dimensions.

Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire (*Blake and Mouton, 1964*)-The study will use Blake and Mouton's managerial grid model to identify leadership styles of selected qualitative sample. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1964) built the managerial grid (based on behavioral leadership model), which is an increasingly used theory of leadership effectiveness. This grid shows the importance of a leader's having concern both for task and for people. That is why it has been adopted extensively by several researchers and industrial organizations to improve interpersonal effectiveness and develop leadership skills (Pop, M. and Pop, D., (2008), Singh, S. B., and Karunes, S.,(2000), Riaz, M.K.et all (2012). The present study will use a questionnaire comprising of 18 items on a 5-point Likert scale to assess the leadership style of qualitative sample. For questionnaire analysis the scoring section will also be used from Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid.

The semi-structured interview: A guide based on descriptive qualitative research will be developed to collect qualitative data on leadership style. Interview questions focused on identifying leaders' unique behaviors, traits, and influence processes and the common themes and strategies they use to effect change in their organizations. MLQ provides numerical measurements of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, while interviews provide detailed information and understanding in specific contexts.

Data Collection Procedure:

The procedure will involve obtaining a sample from institution and website lists and distributing the questionnaire electronically or through the mail, followed by a single follow-up. Participants will be asked to complete the instrument themselves, accompanied by a cover letter containing relevant details about the study. Leaders who score highly on the quantitative results will be purposely selected for in-depth qualitative interviews, lasting between 45-60 minutes, based on the interview guide. The interviews will be captured in recordings and then transcribed.

Data Analysis:

The quantitative data will undergo analysis using SPSS software, wherein reliability and inter-item correlation will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha measurements. Descriptive statistics will summarize patterns in the sample's responses and provide information about the frequency and level of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors in the two sample categories. Inferential statistical methods such as independent t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analysis will compare means across demographic variables and determine significant correlations. The independent variable for these analyses will be the type of leadership demonstrated by the sample.

The qualitative data will be analyzed using content analysis (Flick, 2006) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Content analysis will be used to identify patterns of words or concepts in the qualitative data and to generate codes. Researchers will make inferences and draw themes about the messages embedded in codes identified during analysis. Thematic maps about various leadership styles will be generated to categorize and

summarize the meanings and relationships of words, themes, or concepts in the qualitative data.

Scope of Study:

In order to effectively introduce educational change, the presence of effective leadership is crucial. This study aims to explore the styles and profiles of educational leaders to address inquiries regarding their capability and willingness to initiate change within their schools.According to Lipham (1965), the essence of leadership is achieving organizational objectives.

As educational goals and accountability measures for Indian students and educational leaders continue to advance, a higher level of demonstrated leadership will be demanded at each stage of the educational process. Assuming Indian schools are to work on their adequacy and accomplish the NEP 2020 norms put upon them, the leaders should start and lead the progressions which will get that going.

In order to identify effective leadership styles that will assist in achieving new and higher educational benchmarks, this study will provide direction to educational institutions, management, academic leaders, directors, heads, educators, and policymakers. They would become familiar with the distinction between different administration styles and styles across societies and would know how to apply the excellent style in a specific context. Additionally, this study's findings would provide educational authorities with additional evidence to use in the selection or training of administrators. Considering the consequences of the review, in-service training and advancement projects might be ready further to develop the traits and characteristics of educational leaders. With the assistance of university staff and experts, workshops, and seminars on the most recent trends in efficient leadership strategies can be held. The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) objectives of NEP 2020 state that "School Principals and complex school leaders will have similar modular leadership/management workshops and online development opportunities and platforms to improve their own leadership and management skills continuously and so that they too may share best practices," can be strengthened because of this study.

Expected Outcomes

This research investigates educational leaders' different leadership styles and profiles and their capacity to drive change within their schools. Effective leadership is crucial in achieving educational reform, and Lipham (1965) emphasized the importance of achieving organizational goals through leadership. With the increasing accountability and goals set by NEP 2020 for Indian students and educational leaders, there is a need for a corresponding increase in demonstrated leadership at all levels. This study will guide academic leaders, directors, teachers, and policymakers in identifying effective leadership styles that can help achieve higher education benchmarks. The results can also be used to develop in-service training and development programs to improve the leadership qualities of administrators, as well as conduct workshops and seminars to share best practices.

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores and cross-cultural assesses and compares the leadership styles of education leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders, etc.) in K-12 Indian schools vis-à-vis international schools. The study also aims to advance on how the leadership style of academic leaders is related to culture domains and dimensions and is affected by certain demographic variables. In due course, emerging themes of leadership styles in the Indian and foreign education systems will be gathered and analyzed through the cross-cultural lens and from opened-ended qualitative responses. Further, samples will be collected from two different categories, academic leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, subject leaders) in Indian schools and schools in other countries from both private schools and public schools. For the quantitative study, global leaders and Indian academic leaders (n=100-150 for each cohort) will be randomly selected as samples. From

the same cohort, high-scoring leaders will be randomly selected for qualitative in-depth interviews (n = 10 for each cohort; Indian vis-à-vis Global leaders) through simple probability random sampling method for quantitative study and purposive sampling for qualitative research. Data analysis will be quantitatively done with the help of a t-test, ANOVA, and correlation by SPSS. Qualitative analysis will be done through content and thematic analysis. The study aims to give direction to educational institutions, management, academic leaders, directors, heads, teachers, and policymakers to discern effective leadership styles to help achieve new and higher educational benchmarks.

Keywords – *Leadership styles, Cross-cultural leaders, Higher Education Institutions, New Education policies,*

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